Accordingly, the ex-storage point price of HSD has been revised as under:

Effective Dates	Ex-storage point price (Excluding excise duty etc.) Rs. / KL
07.11.97	7918.04
25.12.97	7996.84
01.03.98	7839.24
04.04.98	7645.47
20.05.98	7536.89

Petrol and Diesel Outlets in Remote and Rural Areas

1187. SHRI C. RAMCHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indian Oil Corporation has any plan to invite entrepreneurs to open petrol and diesel outlets in remote and rural areas;

(b) whether it is a fact that Indian Oil Corporation has not embarked on any imaginative marketing strategy;

(c) the reasons for the slow extension of distribution network in rural areas; and

(d) the steps proposed to review the present system?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR) (a) Yes, Sir. 252 new retail outlets have been included in the approved RO Marketing Plan 1996-97 for Indian Oil Corporation and AOD.

(b) No, Sir. IOC has been taking planned initiative and revising and improving its marketing strategy from time to time.

(c) and (d) In line with the existing policy, retail outlets are being developed in remote and rural areas after carrying out feasibility study. Locations meeting volume/distance norms are included in the marketing plan and are developed. This is an ongoing and continuous process. Accordingly, based on the above criteria, Indian Oil Corporation and its Assam Oil Division (AOD), as on 1.10.1998, are having 6801 retail outlet dealerships all over the country including the rural areas.

LPG Agencies in Chittoor and Cuddapah of Andhra pradesh

1188. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether new LPG agencies and outlets are planned in 1998-99 during the remaining period in Chittoor and Cuddapah districts of Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, the locations selected;

(c) whether Government are aware of the acute shortage of LPG in these districts; and

(d) the steps proposed to relieve this shortage of LPG connections?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) to (d) To meet the increased demand of LPG of Chittoor and Cuddapah districts in Andhra Pradesh, 12 new distributorship in Chittoor district and 21 new LPG distributorships in Cuddapah district have been included in the approved LPG Marketing Plan 1996—98. Selection process has been set in motion with the constitution of three Dealer Selection Boards for Andhra Pradesh. With the commissioning of the LPG distributorships, the demand of the area will be met adequately.

Small and Medium Oil Fields

1189. SHRI BHAGABAN MAJHI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of small and medium oil fields discovered and offered for de-

velopment during 1995-96, 1996-97 and 1997-98;

(b) the locations of these oil fields;

(c) whether any of them is located in Orissa; and

(d) if so, the details thereof, alongwith the progress made in the development of these oil fields?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) and (b) 13 oil fields were made by ONGC, of which 4 were during 1995, 8 during 1996-97 and 1 during 1997-98. Of these 6 are in Gujarat, 3 in Tamil Nadu, 1 in Andhra Pradesh, 1 in Assam and 2 in the Western Offshore.

No discovered small or medium oil fields were offered for development during these three years.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Petrol Pump and LPG Dealerships to STs

1190. SHRI SHIBU SOREN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the number and percentage of Petrol Pump and LPG dealerships allotted to Scheduled Tribes in the last five years, year-wise and State-wise;

(b) whether such agencies are being run by the candidates themselves or on Power of Attorney basis; and

(c) the details of any survey in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) During the last five years *i.e.* 1993-94 to 1997-98, 178 retails outlets and 92 LPG distributorships have been allotted to Scheduled Tribes category. As per existing policy, 25% dealerships/distributorships are reserved for SC/ST category. The locations earmarked for ST category are allotted to 'ST' category only.

(b) and (c) Recently, not such incident has been reported where the dealership/ distributorship allotted to Scheduled Tribe category is being run on Power of Attorney basis. However, BPCL has reported that an LPG distributorship at Mumbai allotted to ST category was found to be run by another person. The distributorship has already been terminated as per the dealership agreement.

To prevent benami operation of dealerships allotted to SC/ST persons on account of financial problems, etc., by others, since 1.4.1992, oil companies are developing all infrastructure and facilities of dealerships allotted to SC/ST. at company's own cost and also provide working capital loan at low interest to these allottees, for running the dealership.

Supply of LPG in Darjeeling Hills

1191. SHRI DAWA LAMA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that people are forced to use fire-wood as fuel in Darjeeling hills;

(b) whether this, in turn is leading to de-forestation and land-slides; and

(c) if so, whether Government will consider supplying LPG at subsidised rates and opening new LPG outlets by relaxing the present guidelines to save Himalayas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) to (c) There are five LPG distributorships in operation in Hill markets of Darjeeling district, which include two each at Darjeeling and Kalimpong and one at Kurseong. As per existing policy, LPG connections in the hilly areas at the altitude of above 2000 ft. are released across the counter. As on 1.12.98, there is reportedly no waiting list with any of the five distributorships. In